General Assembly

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Fifty-fifth session
Agenda item 36

Resolution adopted by the General Assembly

[*without reference to a Main Committee (A/55/L.3 and Add.1)*]

55/18. Bethlehem 2000

The General Assembly,

Recalling the fact that the Palestinian city of Bethlehem is the birthplace of Jesus Christ and one of the most historic and significant sites on earth,

Noting that the world is continuing to celebrate in Bethlehem, a city of peace, the onset of the new millennium in a global vision of hope for all peoples,

Stressing again the monumental importance of the event for the Palestinian people, for the peoples of the region and for the international community as a whole, as it comprises significant religious, historical and cultural dimensions,

Aware of the Bethlehem 2000 Project as a multifaceted undertaking for commemoration of the event, which began at Christmas, 1999, and will come to a close at Easter, 2001,

Aware also of the assistance needed with regard to the above-mentioned Project, and expressing appreciation for the steps already taken towards increasing the engagement and participation of the international community, including donor countries, and organizations of the United Nations system, in particular the United Nations Educational, Scientific and Cultural Organization, the United Nations Development Programme and the World Bank, as well as the European Commission, religious institutions and others,

Recalling the convening of the Bethlehem 2000 International Conference in Rome, on 18 and 19 February 1999, and its impact on the promotion of the Bethlehem 2000 Project and the mobilization of public awareness in all regions in support of this endeavour,

Welcoming the participation in the Bethlehem celebrations of several heads of State and Government and many other eminent personalities, including religious leaders, and expressing appreciation for the Palestinian preparations for this event,

Welcoming also the historic Jubilee 2000 pilgrimage of His Holiness Pope John Paul II to the Holy Land, his landmark visit to the holy sites in Bethlehem and the important message delivered by the Pontiff at Manger Square,

Expressing the need for immediate change in the situation on the ground in the vicinity of Bethlehem, especially with regard to ensuring freedom of movement,

Stressing the need for ensuring free and unhindered access to the holy places in Bethlehem to the faithful of all religions and the citizens of all nationalities,

Expressing the renewed hope for a successful outcome of the Middle East peace process and the achievement of a final settlement between the Palestinian and Israeli sides, so that the millennium may be celebrated in an atmosphere of peace and reconciliation,

1. *Welcomes* this global and historic celebration in Bethlehem and the onset of the third millennium as a symbol of the shared hope for peace among all peoples of the world;

2. *Expresses support* for the Bethlehem 2000 Project, and commends the efforts undertaken by the Palestinian Authority in this regard;

3. *Notes with appreciation* the worldwide support for the Bethlehem 2000 Project, and calls for sustained assistance and engagement by the international community as a whole, including private sector participation, in ensuring the success of the Project and of this monumental commemoration;

4. *Requests* the Secretary-General to continue to mobilize the pertinent organizations and agencies of the United Nations system to increase their efforts to ensure the successful completion of the Bethlehem 2000 Project;

5. *Decides* to conclude, at the current session, consideration by the General Assembly of the item entitled "Bethlehem 2000".

54th plenary meeting
7 November 2000